

Brine Leas School

An Academy

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

At Brine Leas School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. Our educational trips are many and varied, but with a clear purpose offering our students unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative, to extend their learning and to spend time together in an informal environment.

It is the school's duty to ensure that all educational visits are safely managed and that the health, safety and welfare of students, staff and volunteers are maintained in accordance with the guidelines by the DfES in the 'Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies'. December 2012.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All the activities covered in this document take place within a legal framework. Adult supervisors in charge of young people during a visit have a duty of care to make sure they remain safe and healthy.

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the party leader, the educational visits co-ordinator, the head of establishment, supervisory staff and the governing body.

2.2 The Party Leader

Appointed by the EVC and/or head of establishment, the party leader has overall responsibility for the control and leadership of staff and young people throughout the duration of the visit or journey. They should be appointed on the basis of seniority, personality and experience. Party leaders should have two or more years' experience in post. However, it is recognised that for particularly simple activities, e.g. a local visit, the head of establishment might, at his/her discretion, select a less experienced party leader, a teaching assistant could be the party leader.

In all cases, the visit can only go ahead if there is a suitable party leader.

The responsibilities of the party leader include:

- Obtaining the appropriate level of approval for every visit or journey;
- Ensuring adequate first aid provision is always available;
- Ensuring that all supervisors are carefully chosen;
- Being aware of child protection issues;
- Reviewing each visit, informing the head of establishment and EVC concerning any significant incident or where adjustments might be made;
- Having enough information on the young people proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed;
- Stopping the visit or an activity if the risk to the health and safety of party members or members of the public is unacceptable and having a back-up alternative plan in place for such an eventuality;
- Ensuring supervision ratios are appropriate and supervisory practice is good. With regard to good supervision, it is important to consider how it would be affected if a member of staff were for any reason required to leave the party;
- Undertaking all aspects of the planning and preparation, including the preparation of parents, staff and young people via letters and pre-visit briefings. The party leader should also complete a thorough risk assessment, which has taken into account issues raised by their preliminary visit. Further information on preliminary visits and risk assessments can be found in sections 4 and 5 respectively.
- Preparing the staff attending the visit, ensuring that roles and responsibilities have been clearly established for each member of staff; this should also include the nomination of a deputy. Supervisors should be well informed concerning the programme and aims of the visit;
- All staff should be made aware of the emergency procedures and should know how to get hold of the school's emergency contact. Staff must also have a good knowledge of any medical or special needs the young people may have;
- Developing a programme for the visit that is appropriate to the abilities and needs of the young people, whilst remaining consistent with the school's aims and objectives.

The above points define particular responsibilities of the party leader, but it must be stressed that the party leader has overall responsibility for all aspects of the journey or visit and as such must be familiar with all the guidance within this document, giving proper consideration to any directions or advice given.

2.3 The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

The EVC's functions are to:

- Communicate with the LEA to ensure that LEA requirements, including those of risk assessment, are carried out appropriately;
- Support and advise the head of establishment, governing body and party leaders with approval and other decisions;
- Assess, choose, induct and train party leaders and other supervisory adults;
- Ensure that all Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place as necessary;
- Ensure the party leader obtains the consent or refusal of parents, having provided complete details of the visit beforehand, such that parents can grant or refuse consent on a fully-informed basis;
- Organise emergency arrangements and ensure that there is a duty officer for each visit;

- Ensure that the party staff understand how to contact the duty officer and other emergency contacts;
- Keep records of individual visits including reports of accidents and 'near accidents';
- Review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice;
- Ensure that portable first aid kits are available to groups taking part in off-site activities and that these kits are checked regularly by a designated member of staff.
- The EVC should be completely familiar with the responsibilities identified for heads of establishment.

2.4 The Head of Establishment and EVC.

In general, the head of establishment is responsible for ensuring that the party leader properly plans and manages visits and journeys. The purpose of the activity should be compatible with the aims of the establishment and form part of a planned, coherent programme.

Responsibilities are to ensure that:

- There is appropriate delegation of tasks to the EVC;
- Visits comply with all guidelines and regulations set out by the school and the LEA regarding health and safety;
- The purpose of the activity is appropriate for the group involved;
- The visit's educational objectives are inclusive and are made known to the relevant parties via the pre-visit documentation;
- The responsibilities laid out for EVCs and party leaders are properly discharged, such as checking that party leaders have completed risk assessments prior to the visit;
- The purpose of the activity is compatible with the aims of the establishment and is part of a planned, coherent programme;
- The EVC selects a suitably competent and experienced party leader, who is qualified to lead the party and of a physical fitness appropriate to the nature of the activity;
- The ratio of supervisors to young people is appropriate;
- There is a system for evaluating all visits and journeys in order that future ventures can be enhanced as necessary. The evaluation should also be used to inform training needs, for which resources should be made available where a need is identified;
- The governing body is aware of all visits and has sufficient information so that it can raise questions and give direction as necessary;
- With the EVC, the risk assessment has satisfactorily responded to all issues raised from all relevant visit information, including preliminary visits;
- Consideration is given to best value in the choice of contractors and types of contracts made;
- Contractors have appropriate emergency procedures and that these will successfully link in with those of the school;
- A de-brief is carried out with the EVC and party leader following any significant visit or incident. In practice this would include foreign and residential visits or day visits during which an incident occurred;
- There are adequate child protection procedures in place;
- Training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered;
- Group leaders have been allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly;

- Time and resources are available for the induction and training of staff and volunteers;
- The governing body has approved the visit, if appropriate;
- Parents have signed consent forms;
- All party supervisors and the duty officer have the names of all party members with contact details of next of kin;
- Arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people;
- Adequate first aid provision is available;
- The mode of transport is appropriate;
- Travel times out and back are known, including pick-up and drop-off points;
- The address and phone number of the venue to be visited and a contact name are known;
- A duty officer has been nominated and the party supervisors all have contact details and a copy of the emergency procedures;
- Accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
- A contingency plan (Plan B) exists, covering for example the problems posed by staff illness or the need to alter routes or activities during the visit;
- The consent form carries details of the contingency plan;
- The proper recording and reporting of accidents and incidents takes place. Accident and incident records should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future visits.

In situations where it is proposed that the children, relatives or close friends of staff will be with a school/youth group on an off-site activity, there is a risk that a conflict of roles may occur. With this in mind, the role and responsibilities of the leader or any designated supervisor must be made absolutely clear – i.e. that his/her first duty is to the group as a whole. Any adult not accepting this should not be chosen. In particular, heads of establishment should consider the advisability of allowing children of a different age from those in the group to accompany the party. However, a possible solution, where children of staff are involved, might be that a friend or partner might accompany the group and take responsibility for those children only and have no other supervisory role. Such an accompanying adult should meet the full cost of his/her place. Furthermore; any member of staff taking their own children on a school trip cannot be considered as the supervisor or lead. When a child accompanying a member of staff is not a registered pupil at the educational establishment, the school's Third Party Liability Insurance will not apply, and appropriate insurance should be taken out privately.

2.5 The Governing Body

The governing body should ensure that:

- The school policy for educational visits is adhered to;
 - There is a specific and stated objective for every visit;
 - The head of establishment/party leader shows how their plans comply with the school's regulations and guidelines;
 - Significant issues or incidents are reported back to the governing body.
- Governing bodies should challenge the nature of the visit if educational objectives are not inclusive or unclear, or the means to meet these objectives are not realistic or inappropriate for the group concerned. It is not expected that governors should become involved in risk assessments or related planning matters;

- Before bookings are confirmed, the LEA approves visits as necessary;
- Early planning and pre-visits take place such that their outcomes can be properly acted upon;
- Bookings are not completed until external providers have met all the necessary assurances;
- They assess proposals for those types of visits identified for approval by the governing body;
- An agreement has been reached with the head of establishment, regarding which types of visits they will be informed about and how this will be managed;
- The head of establishment and the EVC have taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include young people with special educational needs or medical needs on a visit.

3. **STAFF TO STUDENT RATIOS**

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to students for any visit. Various factors should be taken into consideration, such as the age of the group, the nature of the activities, the duration and nature of the journey and the specific needs of any students within the group.

A minimum of 2 staff must accompany any group of students, unless agreed otherwise by the EVC. An example of a trip where 2 staff may not be required would be a short walk into Nantwich with a small group of sixth formers.

For day trips a ratio of 1 staff member to 15 students must not be exceeded, with a minimum of 2 staff for every trip.

For residential trips in the UK and abroad, a ratio of 1 staff member to every 10 students must not be exceeded, with a minimum of 2 staff for every trip.

4. **STAFFING**

The school recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit. The selection of staff for educational visits is a key priority in determining the initial approval of any proposed visit. Where appropriate, the school will ensure that DBS screening is available for volunteer adults assisting with educational visits, e.g. overnight stays. Accompanying staff and adult helpers must have the appropriate skills.

5. **APPROVAL AND CONSENT**

For any venture, a preliminary discussion must be had with the EVC and, subject to satisfactory submission of a draft outline for the educational visit, preliminary approval will be given to continue.

Written parental consent must be sought by the trip organising, confirming that they have understood the purpose, estimated cost and arrangements for the visit and give permission for their child to go on the visit.

Parents/Carers are also requested to provide up-to-date emergency contact and medical information so that the appropriate first aid arrangements can be put in place. Students may not go on a visit if the signed forms have not been received.

6. **FIRST AID**

First Aid requirements form part of the risk assessment carried out by the trip organiser. As a minimum, a suitably stocked first-aid box and a person appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements will be in place for every trip. Increased levels of first aid cover will be dependent upon the nature of the trip and the students taking part. Students with serious medical conditions will require a high level of first aid competence during the trip. Activities which are potentially hazardous or remote from medical assistance will also require a higher level of first aid competence.

7. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

As stated above, the trip organiser must carry out a risk assessment covering all aspects of the proposed trip which must be approved by the EVC.

Ongoing 'dynamic' risk assessment will be continued by the trip organiser throughout the trip to ensure that hazards are monitored and appropriate safety measures are put into place. It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to ensure that all accompanying staff are familiarised with the risk assessment and to continue to brief staff throughout the trip.

8. **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting 'in loco parentis' and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect students' health and safety is useful to parents and will be included in letter to parents/carers prior to a visit:-

- Dates of the visit.
- Times of departure and return.
- Mode of travel.
- Visits' objectives.
- Details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed.
- Clothing and equipment to be taken.
- Money to be taken.
- The information to be given to parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

If parents withhold consent absolutely, the student should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the student in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent, the Headteacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The school's parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group.

9. **STUDENT BEHAVIOUR**

For all visits the students should be adequately briefed about the aims, expectations and codes of conduct for the visit. Students should be engaged in evaluating the risks of the tasks they are about to undertake. In all cases, parents and students should be made aware of the standards of behaviour expected and the sanctions which may be used in cases where the standards are breached. In all cases, the parent consent form requires that parents agree that the school reserves the right to send their child home if their behaviour is inappropriate. For residential visits it may be appropriate to require parents and students to sign a Code of Conduct Agreement.

10. **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The trip organiser must ensure that full details of the visits are retained at school by key personnel who can be contacted if there are changes of plan or there is an emergency.

Staff must ensure that they keep emergency contact details for students and staff with them at all times, and that they have the correct insurance information readily available.

As stated in Section 10, paragraph 246 of HASPEV, the school staff will:-

- Ensure that the group are all present and accounted for.
- Seek immediate medical attention for any casualties.
- Ensure that any casualty going to hospital is accompanied by a teacher.
- Maintain adequate supervision for the remaining group members.
- Notify the Police and/or the British Embassy as appropriate.
- Keep the emergency school contact informed of the nature, date and time of the incident, location, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured.

Also, in accordance with Emergency Procedures for Group Leaders, the school staff will:-

- Know that no-one in the group should speak to the media. All media enquiries should be handled by the Headteacher. The school purchases support from the Local Authority and they would advise and direct any contact with the media.
- Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families.
- Record accurately as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.

10. **INSURANCE**

The school holds appropriate insurance for all school visits and this is renewed every September.

The policy provides extensive insurance cover however the trip organisers must ensure they check the travel insurance if they are undertaking hazardous activities and contact the insurer for advice if there is any doubt that the activity is not covered. The trip organiser must keep the insurance details with them at all times on the trip.

11. **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

Only reputable companies are used for transport. The travel requirements are risk assessed taking into account all the relevant factors such as distances to be travelled and likely weather conditions, and appropriate arrangements are made to ensure optimal safety conditions for travel. All staff who drive students are checked for valid driving licenses and if they are driving a minibus they must have passed a minibus test. The trip organiser must carry out all reasonable checks to make sure that safety is maintained as far as reasonably practicable.

12. **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

When assessing risk, particular attention is paid to any member of the group who has a disability, medical condition or specific educational need. As previously stated, parents are requested to provide any update of medical information on the consent form and to give consent for any emergency medical treatment which may be considered necessary. It is the trip organiser's responsibility to take all medical information on the trip and ensure the relevant supervising staff are provided with appropriate information. Students must be reminded and checked that they have all the necessary medication and equipment.

13. **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum and will be submitted to governors for approval.

Prepared by: P Whitehead	Date: April 2016
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